

TOP SECRET

NRO 25X1A

Copy 1

NRO DECLASSIFICATION/RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS ON FILE

24 DEC 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Presidential Response to Query Concerning
U-2 Overflight Policy.

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for your consideration. Such recommendation is contained in paragraph 5.

2. There is always a possibility that in his press conference President will be queried concerning his policy with regard to U-2 overflights of the Soviet Union. The probability of this issue being raised would be heightened by any incident which would again focus attention on the U-2 but even in the absence of such an incident it is considered highly desirable that the President be provided in advance with a response worded in such manner as to afford the least inhibition to future intelligence collection activities deemed essential to national security.

3. Because of its pertinence there is attached the verbatim exchange between President Kennedy and the press at his press conference on 25 January 1961. It should be noted that, contrary to popular assumption, President Kennedy did not make any pledge or give any assurance, at least publicly, that there would be no further overflights. He limited his response to a statement that he had ordered that the flights not be resumed. Another, obviously, is valid only until countermanded.

4. In light of the foregoing, it is proposed that if the President is queried on this matter he respond with the following statement (this may also help to set the record straight):

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

BEST COPY**TOP SECRET**Handle via [REDACTED] NRO 25X1A
Control System

TOP SECRET

NRO 25X1A

"As you are all aware, President Kennedy at his news conference on 25 January 1961, stated that he had ordered that such flights not be resumed. That order has never been countermanded and so far as I am concerned is still in effect."

If the questioner should pursue the matter by asking under what conditions might the order be countermanded and such flights resumed, it is proposed that the President answer as follows:

"I think it would be highly inappropriate for me to speculate on any such purely hypothetical future situation."

5. Recommendation:

That the President be briefed on the possibility that the U-2 overflight policy issue may be raised at some future press conference and that he be prepared to respond with the statements proposed in paragraph 4 above.

Original signed by

25X1A

for ALBERT D. WHEELON
Deputy Director
(Science and Technology)

Attachment - 1 25X1A2g
Verbatim Transcript [REDACTED]

TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

NRO 25X1A

Signature Recommended:

25X1A9a

(Signed [REDACTED] 23 DEC 1963

AD/OSA

SAL/OSA/[REDACTED]:sai (23 Dec 63) 25X1A9a

Distribution:

- Copy 1 -- DCI (w/att)
- Copy 2 -- DDCI (w/att)
- Copy 3 -- Ex. Dir./CIA (w/att)
- Copy 4 -- DD/S & T (w/att)
- Copy 5 -- DD/S & T (w/att)
- Copy 6 -- AD/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 7 -- DAD/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 8 -- SS/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 9 -- PS/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 10 -- D/FA/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 11 -- ID/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 12 -- SAL/OSA (w/att)
- Copy 13 -- SAL/OSA (Chrono) (w/att)
- Copy 14 -- RB/OSA (w/att)

TOP SECRET